

MINUTES
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13 2016
6:15 p.m.
PUBLIC HEARING ON CITY OF MARION'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

AT 6:15, Mayor Bobby L. Davis called to order the Public Hearing for *the City of Marion's Comprehensive Plan*, as presented by Dan Vismore. Council members Michael Baker, Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Odessa Gregg, Emerson Hunt and Joseph Frazier were present. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons and City Clerk Pam Jones. Mr. Vismore briefly went over the 10-Year Comprehensive Plan for the City and what it could do for the City. It is designed to be used as an internal document and phasing development in over time. Councilman Ralph Atkinson commented that if we can't afford to complete everything, we can roll it over until we can. Mr. Vismore agreed and commented that the City should look at Capital Improvements and adjust the budget accordingly as the City can afford it. With no further comments, Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilwoman Odessa Gregg; motion carried.

6:30 p.m.
REGULAR MEETING

A regular meeting was held by City Council on Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. over which Mayor Bobby L. Davis presided. Council members Michael Baker, Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Odessa Gregg, Joseph Frazier and Emerson Hunt were present. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Pam Jones and the City Attorney.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order and Councilwoman Gregg gave the opening prayer. Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Davis welcomed citizens, guests and the press. (Hometown TV).

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on November 8, 2016, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier. Councilwoman Gregg asked that the date be corrected in the minutes from November 18 to November 8. (The original copy of the minutes has been changed). Motion carried.

Marion Fire Department's Captain Jackie Yates was named *November Employee of the Month* and received a gift certificate. Mayor Davis stated that Captain Yates was doing an excellent job for the City and could always be counted on.

The Mayor's Monthly Beautification award was given to Jimmy and Anne Burroughs for their cleaning up of the Housing Authority areas. Mrs. Burroughs thanked Mayor Davis for the award.

Mr. Dan Vismore presented the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Marion, which is done every 10 years, to give the City a plan for the present and future years. He also gave information that was discussed in the Public Hearing. A copy of the Comprehensive Plan will be available if any resident would like to come to City Hall to review. Mr. Vismore suggested that Council adopted the Plan as recommended by the City's Planning Commission. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to give 2nd Reading on **ORDINANCE 16-09 ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR CITY OF MARION, SOUTH CAROLINA**, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried. Mayor Davis thanked Mr. Vismore for his hard work in preparing this Plan.

Mayor Davis asked that if there was no objection from Council, he would ask that Mr. Schelg be moved up on the Agenda and make his presentation after Senator Williams and before the Body Camera demo. There was no objection.

At the request of Councilman Joseph Frazier, Senator Kent Williams presented an update on Highway Funding and give the City residents the same update that was given at the County Council meeting. In the 2015-16 appropriation bill, we were able to get more funding for our CTC committees throughout the state. Senator Williams stated that we feel like the local people have a better feel for the more immediate and pressing highway needs in the community so we funnel more money to our CTC committee so that elected officials can have more leeway on putting that money where it is most needed. In the 2015-16 appropriation bill we were able to get an additional \$216,000,000, of which Marion County got \$2,639,200 in CTC funds. In our current year 2016-17, we were able to get \$50,000,000. This was all in addition to our normal CTC funds, which is usually around \$1,000,000. The financial for this year is not as good, but hopefully we will be surprised, as we have in the past. Our highway needs across the State are tremendous. Senator Williams commented that there are a lot of needs in the City of Marion and believes that there will be money available. He further commented that Mr. Ammons had gone before the CTC

and had got a favorable response in addressing some needs. Some roads have already been resurfaced in the City. Also regarding the Parks and Recreation funding, in the 2016 budget there was about \$21,000 - \$22,000 from the County in the City budget. This year we were able to get additional Park funds into the budget; beginning January 1, you will get an additional \$40,000+, which will address some Parks & Recreation needs. Senator Williams commented on the devastation that Marion County suffered from Hurricane Matthew and a Marion County Recovery Fund Aid has been established to help those who cannot be helped by FEMA (FEMA only comes in to help stabilize those affected), as well as those who had no flood insurance, as it was not required in the area they lived in. The Recovery Fund Aid will be used help fill in the gap between FEMA and what people really need to get back. This will not be an overnight journey, but a long road to recovery. Most of us have never seen anything like this before and it's hard to imagine until it hits your community, your neighbors, your family. Nichols and Marion County both have Recovery Fund Aid accounts and both are set up at Anderson Brothers Bank. The Marion County Healthcare Foundation has committed a \$200,000 match, \$100,000 for Nichols and \$100,000 for Marion County. Nichols has already reached their \$100,000 to get their matching funds. The Marion County Recovery Committee has set up 16 care centers throughout the County and the majority of them are faith-based. People across the whole country have been very generous in donating goods. Anvil Knitwear is the central location for housing those goods. They are sorted, packaged and distributed to the centers around the County for our citizens to pick up. Senator Williams thanked the Council and Mayor for what they do, as they are the closest to the people and they are heavily relied on as to the needs of the people. The bottom line is to help improve the quality of life for our citizens. Senator Williams stated that his door is always open. Senator Williams also mentioned that the problem of dilapidated houses is being discussed and the Municipal Association is now pushing for legislation that if the City goes in and cleans up a blighted area, then this will be treated like a non-paid property tax and charged to the property owners' property tax and he supports this effort. Mayor Davis thanked Senator Williams for coming to address these issues to everyone. Mayor Davis commented that he was told by Mr. Scott Slatton (MASC) that he is trying to do is get the monies allocated to the counties to go directly to the cities, because right now we do not get the money from the CTC, it goes directly to the County and then is allocated to the cities. Senator Williams suggested that the municipalities have a "seat at the table" on the CTC Committee, which would be one way to remedy that issue and that is something that can be looked at, as we want it to be fair and impartial. Regarding the dilapidated buildings, Mayor Davis commented that there is a piece of legislation being pushed by MASC to help with that issue because it is not as easy as it may seem to go in and tear down somebody's building because they won't take care of

it. We could do it but we would be sued and Marion does not have that kind of money to pay for stuff like that, so we have to follow procedure. Mayor Davis stated that we certainly appreciate what Senator Williams is doing to take care of us from the State level. Councilman Frazier commented that he personally wanted to thank Senator Williams for coming to the meeting, as he (Frazier) had been on his case. He further commented that Senator Williams did not need an invitation and the City takes care of him and anything that comes down the pipe, bring it here and let Council and our residents know.

Mr. Carl Schleg asked that fees be waived for use of the Opera House on January 14, 2017 for an Education Seminar on "South Carolina's Next Big Crop", the cultivation of hemp by local farmers. He explained this hemp is not the same as marijuana, but used in textiles, building materials, food, body care and a vast number of products for the public. Local farmers have been invited to attend. Councilman Emerson Hunt made a motion to waive the fee for Mr. Schleg's meeting at the Opera House, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. Motion carried.

Mayor Davis stated that the City was able to get body cameras for the Police Department. Chief Tennie stated that the Police Department received a grant to cover 19 body cameras which would be for all uniformed officers, SRO's and 2 extras for backup. Lt. Tony Flowers of the Marion Police Department gave a demonstration on the new Body Cameras and explained how they would work. He noted that each officer would have their own camera and that info from the camera could be stored in-house and kept indefinitely. Councilman Ralph Atkinson inquired if the cameras would be on all the time, to which Lt. Flowers responded they would not, they will be on when answering a call and at all traffic stops. The policy is that when the officer responds to a call the camera is cut on, and not cut off until they get back in the car. The first offense for not following this policy is a written warning, the 2nd time is suspension, the 3rd time including up to termination. The benefit of the camera is transparency, as the citizens can see exactly what the officer sees. Only Lt. Flowers, Capt. Cindy Barr, Capt. Chris Smith, Chief Tennie and the Solicitor's office are able to view the videos. The public would have to go through the Solicitor's office to view the tapes. Mayor Davis commented that these body cameras will be beneficial to the Police Department and to the citizens and thanked everyone at the Police Department involved in acquiring the cameras.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to accept the low bid of \$15,000 from Causey's Flooring to purchase carpet for C. D. Joyner. Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson offered a second and the motion carried.

The proposal for track hoe repairs was given to Council for review and will be placed on the January agenda.

Regarding the Curfew Ordinance, Councilman Ralph Atkinson stated that we need to enforce the Ordinance that is already in place.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ammons stated that it would cost \$147, 500 to resurface from Gregg to Liberty Street. Paving has been postponed until March, due to weather conditions. SCDOT will be making a final sweep to clean up storm damage. They will continue to make these pickups on Saturdays and Sundays as it is easier to block the streets off on those days while they are using heavy equipment. January 5, 2017 is the final date to pick up vegetation and the final sweep for C & D will start January 1, 2017. Councilman Atkinson wants the City to try and get the word out about the pickup of C & D. He has explained to those calling that DOT, not the City, has a contract and will be picking C& D up. Mr. Ammons will ask Mr. Harper if the County can put that out on the Alert System. Mr. Ammons does not think we should issue anything in the press because DOT did issue a press release. Councilman Atkinson would like another announce issued as to when and what DOT would be picking up. Mr. Ammons responded that he would talk to Harold Coleman at SCDOT. Our crews are back on their regular routes now and DOT will continue with their pickup. Mayor Davis commented that the bottom line is we have no control over DOT and the contractors, other than to ask them to go to a certain spot if they've never picked up anything in that area. He pleads with everyone to patient with what we're trying to do and we're going as fast as we possibly can. Mayor Pro-tem Atkinson commented that the City looks a thousand times better, but what our citizens see is Christmas lights being put up and truck riding by their homes and not stopping to pick debris, or picking up debris on one side of the street and not the other, which they are very concerned about. When he calls the Street Superintendent he says that they have done it and Mr. Atkinson says they have not because he has put his own eyes on it. The people out there say they are tired of seeing the trucks just ride past and not pick anything up. Mr. Ammons responded that they are back on their regular routes now and 2 additional temporary workers have been hired and we should not have that problem

anymore. Mayor Pro-tem Atkinson commented that we shouldn't have been having this problem if they were doing what they were supposed to. We had a lot of devastation and a lot of extra stuff, but they need to do what they were paid to do before the storm. Mr. Ammons stated that DOT has assured Mayor Davis and himself that if they missed something big, they would come back. Mayor Davis and Mr. Ammons went to those areas where trash was not picked up and took care of it. They want the public to understand that if they do not tell them when something like that happens, they won't know. If they are told they have, and will, respond. On another note, Mr. Ammons stated the demolition of the building behind Smith-Collins will be completed by Mr. Herrington by Christmas. MR. Ammons explained the law regarding demolition of property and how the City may or may not be able to recoup the money it costs to take down a building. This is what Senator Williams remarked about the legislature is working on to help the municipalities in dealing with the blighted areas.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

City Attorney Chris Elliott commented that he was very impressed with the body camera demonstration. He had nothing to update at this time.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Departmental reports are sent in Council packets.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Councilman Emerson Hunt had no comment at this time.

Councilwoman Odessa Gregg had no comment at this time.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Councilman Joseph Frazier commended Mayor Davis and Mr. Ammons on getting trash picked up when he calls. He questioned why the map registry still shows Bobby L. Davis Blvd. as Mill Street. He asked that Mr. Ammons check into that as it is an injustice to name a street after someone and then play games getting it changed in whatever system needs changing. Mayor Davis commented that Bobby Gerald Parkway also was not changed on the map registry and he went to see Jeffrey Graham at Marion County regarding that. The problem is that emergency personnel in Marion need to be able to pull the addresses up on GPS when they have to go on a call. Mayor Davis wants the state to get involved in correcting this. Mr. Ammons stated that when these addresses are pulled up on DOT, they are correct,

but when they are pulled up on some of these GPS units, depending on which Google used, some come up with the correct address and some still with the old. We will continue to talk with Mr. Graham to get this corrected.

Councilman Michael Baker had no comment at this time.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis commented that the Monument of Faith Church is being used as a care center for the citizens of Marion. We have not received any funding for the roads yet. We have monies to fix what Mr. Ammons alluded to earlier in the meeting. We need to have someone at the table so that when CTC money comes into our County we will know exactly what it is and where it's going and get our fair share. The County has been pretty good about it overall, but that's what we need and that's what we've been pushing. We are going to meet our goal of 125 Food Boxes for the needy. The recipient's names come from DSS, Council on Aging and the Housing Authority and are people they feel really need them. Our goal is to give to the needy, not the greedy. Mayor Davis has the authority to allow free use of our buildings, but was not 100% in sync with what Mr. Schleg and wanted Council to be involved in this decision, so they would be able to tell any citizens who asked why we allowed someone to come talk about hemp and that it was a Council decision.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Lynn Corson was present to make comments on the Juvenile Curfew Ordinance. The Neighborhood Watch teams asked that the curfew be revised to 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. She does not agree that juveniles have right to be on the street during these times as stores are closed, sporting events are over, etc. They should be home resting in preparation for the next day's school and sporting events. She stated that Juveniles do not have the same rights as adults, they are citizens in training. It is the responsibility of the parents, the police and the citizens of this community to do the best job possible in molding these young people into law-abiding citizens. Tax-paying, law-abiding citizens have the right to feel safe in their homes during these hours of the night.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to enter Executive Session to get Legal Update - Police Department and Personnel Matter – Police Department, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried. Upon returning from Executive Session, Mayor Davis stated that no action was taken. Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to return to open session, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis

City Clerk Pam Jones

Taped December 13, 2016